

New Exhibition Opens at Vienna Arts Society Center

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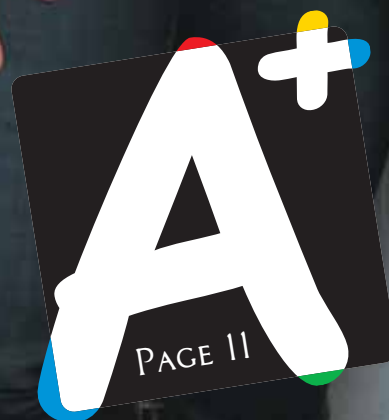
Ursula Nogic, Wei Lu, Debi Elliott and Grace Rooney of the Vienna Arts Society share their artistic thoughts at the artists reception celebrating the opening of the January exhibition, Winners' Wall, on Jan. 12 at the art center on Pleasant Street. Lu is holding one of her works. Behind the artists is one of Elliott's art pieces.

'Really Strong Dancers, Powerhouse Singers'

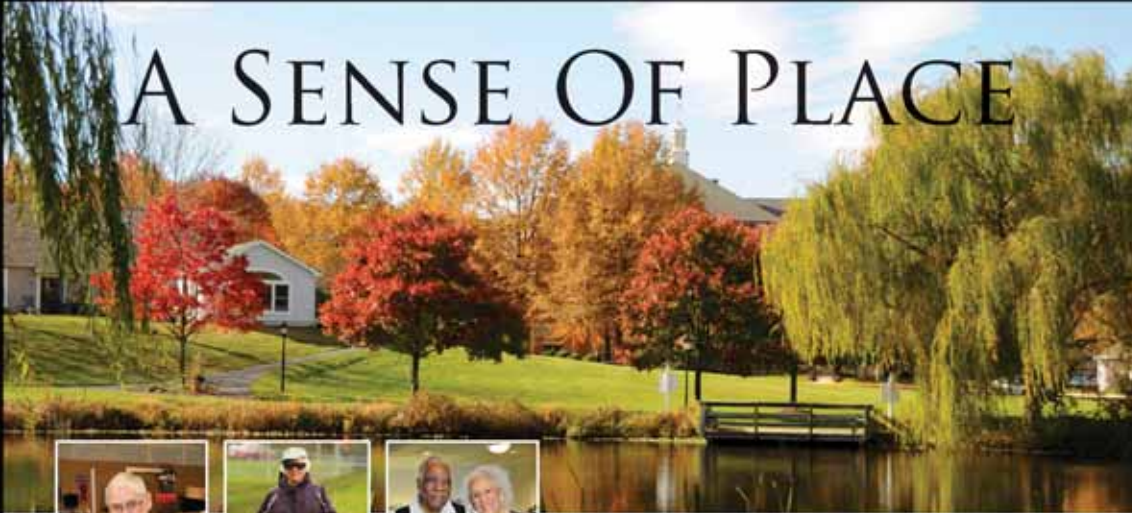

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Let Sun Shine on Virginia's Financial Disclosure Laws

State legislators turn attention to ethics in wake of McDonnell gift scandal.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

As members of the Virginia General Assembly convene for the first time since last February, legislators are stampeding to introduce ethics legislation in response to the gift scandal which engulfed then Gov. Robert F. McDonnell (R).

The revelations last spring about numerous undisclosed gifts and purported loans from businessman Jonnie Williams to McDonnell — including a \$6,500 Rolex watch engraved to the “71st Governor of Virginia” and \$35,000 in gifts and catering for his daughters’ weddings — shined a spotlight on Virginia’s porous financial disclosure laws.

McDonnell, who remains under federal investigation over his relationship with Williams, pointed to various loopholes in existing state law as reasons for not disclosing gifts, noting that state law requires only the disclosure of gifts directly to officeholders, and not their families.

Following the principle cited by Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis that “Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants,” state Sen. Chap Petersen (D-Fairfax) has introduced an ethics reform package which he says “makes the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) a centerpiece.”

PETERSEN’S BILLS would increase disclosure, limit contributions and gifts, prohibit the use of private law firms for state business, and create an ethics commission, ideally with subpoena power, to hold legislators accountable and increase transparency.

“The era of Rolexes, lake-house vacations, and \$150,000 loans must end,” Petersen said. “For far too long those of us who serve in Richmond have relied on super-sized political contributions to fund our campaigns. That is a part of our current flawed culture. Working Virginians don’t see campaign donations larger than their yearly incomes as ‘no strings attached.’ They see a transaction.”

Petersen’s package of ethical reform bills takes its place alongside several others announced last week, including a bipartisan reform package unveiled Tuesday, Jan. 7, by House Majority Leader M. Kirkland Cox (R-Colonial Heights) and House Minority Leader David J. Toscano (D-Charlottesville).

Under the Kirkland-Toscano bill, reforms include:

- ❖ A \$250 cap on tangible gifts to officials and their immediate family members



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34), sitting, confers with a colleague during last year’s General Assembly session. After the session ended in February, it was disclosed that federal and state authorities had launched an investigation regarding gifts given to then-Gov. Robert McDonnell (R) and his family. The investigation served to heighten public awareness of Virginia’s lax financial disclosure laws.

from lobbyists or people with business before the state.

- ❖ A ban on solicitation of those gifts.
- ❖ The requirement that family members’ finances and gifts be disclosed.
- ❖ The creation of an ethics commission that would serve as a resource, providing legislators guidance on issues that may pose a conflict of interest.

“What we have really tried to do here is take the best parts of our current system, which is fairly strict reporting accountability, and in targeted areas, we’ve really tried to beef that up and really get at some of the problems,” Cox said at a news conference in Richmond last week with Republican and Democratic leaders.

Petersen said his proposals differed significantly from the House bill.

“I’m not overly impressed by the ‘bipartisan compromise’ announced in the House this week. My package has teeth. My intention is to change the culture, not just close the loopholes,” Petersen said in an interview on Wednesday, Jan. 8.

“The other issue that’s part of my proposal is making FOIA the centerpiece,” Petersen said. “I think my FOIA bill is critical for bringing more transparency to this process. That’s a huge difference, because without that it’s really hard to know what’s going

on and it’s for people and the media to investigate.”

Petersen said he wants his ethics commission to have subpoena power, which would give the group the authority to compel lawmakers to testify and produce evidence, or face a penalty for failure to comply.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, more than 40 states have similar ethics commissions, most with subpoena power.

Petersen said he has long been bothered by the lack of financial transparency in Virginia, and the ensuing erosion of the public’s trust.

WHEN REPORTS ABOUT THE ROLEX surfaced last July, Petersen sent a letter to the governor asking him to “come clean on this matter” by explaining the gifts, denying the reports, or resigning from office. He became the first Virginia lawmaker to suggest McDonnell’s resignation in the wake of the deepening controversy over the lavish gifts.

“For too long, we’ve said ‘hey, we’re honorable gentleman, we can police ourselves.’ Unfortunately, there have been too many recent incidents to contradict that,” Petersen said.

“That’s why I’ve introduced four bills that

What Petersen’s Ethics Package Would Do

- ❖ **SB212:** FOIA for General Assembly members and staff - SB212 removes the General Assembly’s exception from the Virginia FOIA act. This bill repeals the 2013 General Assembly FOIA exemption act (HB1639), patroned by Del. Tag Greason (R-Potomac Falls).
- ❖ **SB218:** Limits on Campaign Contributions and Gifts - SB218 Limits General Assembly members and Executives in the Commonwealth to a total of \$2,000 in gifts per year. All gifts over \$50 will continue to be itemized and reported. “Super-sized” campaign donations will be limited to \$20,000 per individual donor per candidate.
- ❖ **SB220:** Prohibiting the Use of Private Law Firms for State Business - SB220 requires the office of the Attorney General to contract local city or county attorneys, rather than private counsel, when it experiences a conflict of interest. This bill will remove the incentive for private law firms to exploit the current law and over-bill the state on a public matter. This bill was brought about due to the ongoing attorney’s fees charged by two firms employed by Attorney Gen. Ken Cuccinelli’s office to defend Gov. Bob McDonnell, reportedly more than \$780,000.
- ❖ **SB219:** Establishment of the Virginia Ethics Commission - SB219 requires that all loans, gifts, and statements of economic interests disclosures shall be filed with the Virginia Ethics Commission. Currently these disclosures are filed to the clerks of each house. The Virginia Ethics Commission will be a body independent of both houses, comprised of both former legislators and distinguished independent citizens whom have never held office. The commission will be able to make recommendations for disciplinary proceedings against legislators found in violation of disclosure laws to their respective house, where members will vote on any disciplinary action.

For more information on these bills, go to:

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?141+sum+SB212>
SB220 (Petersen)
<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?141+sum+SB220>
HB1639: (Greason, 2013)
<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?131+sum+HB1639>
SB218 (Petersen)
<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?141+sum+SB218>
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will increase the public’s right to know, limit campaign contributions to \$20K per candidate from a single donor, end the soaking of taxpayers by white-shoe law firms, and start a truly independent and distinguished ethics commission that includes everyday citizens to hold legislators accountable.”

But Del. Dave Albo (R-42) said he wasn’t overly impressed with Petersen’s bills, and he supports the bipartisan compromise.

“The bipartisan House proposal includes an ethics commission, so I don’t know why Senator Peterson thinks that his ethics commission is better,” Albo said Friday, adding that it’s unrealistic for state lawmakers to impose certain campaign contribution limits.

“If a bill could be crafted that would equally limit [all campaign contributions], then I would support it. But it has to be a level playing field,” Albo said.

“It takes a long time to start earning back the trust that you have lost, and as Virginians, and as public officials, we need to start now,” Petersen said.

‘Really Strong Dancers, Powerhouse Singers’

Oakton High senior is in the musical, ‘Cats.’

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

If Oakton High senior Shanelucas Ramsey has been acting a bit catlike recently, there’s a good reason. He has a featured role in the Fairfax Academy’s upcoming production of “Cats.”

Featuring a cast and crew of nearly 85, it will burst upon the Fairfax High stage in what promises to be a treat for both the eyes and ears. It’s directed by Mike Replogle, director of the Musical Theatre Academy, and choreographed by Andrea Heininge, who heads the Dance Academy.

SHOWTIMES are Friday-Saturday, Jan. 17-18 and 24-25, at 7:30 a.m., and Sunday, Jan. 19 and 26, at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12.50 presale at <http://fxdance.ticketleap.com> or \$15 at the door. Saturday, Jan. 18 and 25, at 2:30 p.m., with the Young Artists Series, shorter performances with \$5 tickets and special activities for children.

There’s no script, just a musical score based on T.S. Eliot’s poems, and the story’s about a tribe of cats. But this hit musical is the second-longest-running show on Broadway. “All cats have to earn their nine lives by serving the tribe or learning something to teach to the next generation,” explained Replogle. “And in each vignette, each cat pleads their case for why they should be renewed.”

Ramsey and Woodson High junior Lara Taylor play burglar cats Mungojerrie and Rumpleteazer, respectively. “They’re not bad, just mischievous,” said Taylor.

“They’re the neighborhood punks,” added Ramsey. “Mungojerrie’s cocky, but not particularly brave. But he’s definitely goofy and weird. He’s a cool cat who enjoys causing mayhem. I love playing him and doing the song and dance we have together. My cat has no boundaries; he’s fun, energetic, cheerful and care-free.”

Taylor said they “don’t hold back” and actually embrace acting like cats. “We’re open to just going for it and giving 100 percent,” she said. “If we give our all, we know the audience will relate to it more.” For example, Ramsey gets into character by getting down on all fours, arching his back and deliberately focusing on making his motions catlike.

“It’s definitely a different experience because it’s a feline-type interaction,” he said. “Sitting down, you can’t cross your legs – and you have to think about the little details of what cats can and can’t do.”

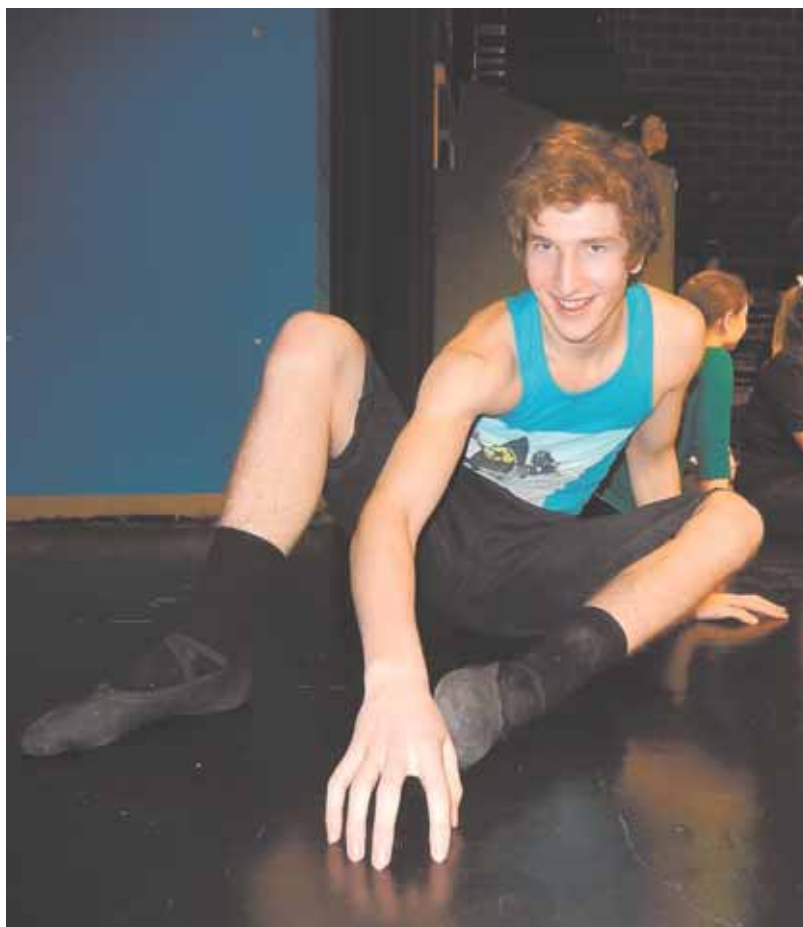


PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Oakton High senior Shanelucas Ramsey plays mischievous, burglar cat Mungojerrie.

In their number called “Mungojerrie and Rumpleteazer,” said Taylor, “We do lots of physical things, besides singing. Rather than being slinky cats, we’re athletic, energetic, funny and in-your-face.”

“I’ve never had a role with vigorous dancing and singing at the same time,” said Ramsey. “It’s an upbeat, character song and comic relief to what’s going on.” He said all the show’s musical numbers will wow the audience because “we have some really strong dancers and powerhouse singers. But I think the highlight is the dancing.”

“The costumes are all airbrushed and unique, and every one is different,” added Taylor. “That, plus the songs, dances, makeup and characterizations of the cats will make it an experience the audience will really enjoy. It’s great for kids, too, with different meanings for multiple generations.”

THE FAIRFAX ACADEMY draws performing-arts students from 20 different schools and these actors have been rehearsing since October. Calling Andrew Lloyd Webber’s music memorable, Replogle said, “Most of it is victorious, uplifting and fun. And Andrea’s really outdone herself and has created some beautiful dances.”

Because the actors are portraying cats, the set’s an oversized end of an alley with trash, tuna cans, broken windows and a fence. Replogle said the makeup is also spectacular. “Each cat’s face will illustrate their personality,” he said. “I hope people leave here remembering why they liked this show so much in the ‘80s.”

There’ll be posters for buses, schools and other locations in support of Just Ask campaign.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

New Campaign Targets Teen Sex Trafficking

Officials from the Fairfax County Police, public schools, Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, and the Northern Virginia community gathered last Friday, Jan. 10, in Fairfax, to kick off a new education and prevention campaign on teen sex trafficking. Defined as “the act of manipulating or forcing anyone under the age of 18 to engage in a sex act in exchange for anything of value (money, drugs, shelter, food, clothes, etc.),” police identify an average of two new potential victims per week.

Many people believe teen sex trafficking only happens to runaways or in other more urban settings. But it’s on the rise across Northern Virginia and teens are now being targeted in public venues — bus stops, walking down the street, parties, shopping malls, through social media outlets and more.

Sex traffickers don’t discriminate; they recruit victims across ethnic, economic and gender strata. Most teens are unaware they’re being drawn in and often don’t recognize the signs of manipulation until it’s too late. Traffickers aren’t just gang members or criminals; they may be business professionals, family members, students and teens they know. The trafficker

may not be a stranger; rather it may be a friend or acquaintance from the classroom.

The Just Ask Prevention Project is a new public-awareness campaign addressing the increasing prevalence of teen sex trafficking in the region. The goal is to inspire residents to get involved with prevention and encourage them to learn more about spotting and reporting manipulative recruiters.

The campaign incorporates age-appropriate and illustrative new videos into the FCPS Health & PE. Family Life Education curriculum. There’s an interactive Website, www.JustAskVA.org, plus a Just Ask Facebook page. There’ll also be posters for buses, schools and other locations. Schools will create a plastic bracelet awareness campaign.

Additionally, the campaign partners with the Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services which will fund several prevention and education programs to better prepare personnel on the front lines to respond to human trafficking victims and survivors. Parents, family, teachers and friends will learn how to recognize the signs and symptoms of teen sex trafficking situations and be urged to report suspicious activities to the FCPD Human Trafficking Unit.

News

Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna Raises Funds for Two Local Charities

For the last fifteen years, the Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna (SCOV) has been hosting their Community Thanksgiving Service along with participating congregations. The monies raised from the service offering are then distributed to local charities. This year's recipients were Our Daily Bread and The Committee for Helping Others. Each charity received \$820 from the service collection. In 2012 SCOV's services, personal enrichment and volunteer opportunities reached more than 3,000 older adults (50+) in the region. SCOV serves seniors in the Oakton, Vienna, Dunn Loring, Merrifield and portions of Fairfax and Reston areas.

Founded in 1997, the Shepherd Center of Oakton-Vienna is a 501 3© nonprofit organization dedicated to providing opportunities for adults (50+) to seek rewarding lives and to live independently in their homes for as long as possible. SCOV was voted the Best Non-profit of the Year (2012) by the Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce. In September 2013, SCOV was selected the Charity of the Month by WTOP 103.5FM Radio. In



From left — Christina Garris, representing Our Daily Bread Fairfax; Michelle Scott, Executive Director for the Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna; and George Bergquist, representing the Committee for Helping Others.

2012 the charity was selected for inclusion in The Catalogue for Philanthropy for their outstanding service.

To volunteer, donate or learn more about the Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna, visit their website at www.scov.org or contact Michelle Scott, Executive Director at 703-281-5088 or director@scov.org.

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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

OPINION

From Late Night Comedy to Your Bedroom

Why the General Assembly matters more in Virginia than most states.

The Virginia General Assembly began its annual session last week on Jan. 8.

The actions of the Virginia General Assembly matter more to localities than it would in many other states. In Virginia, localities have only the power specifically granted by the General Assembly, the Dillon rule.

So, for example, Montgomery County and Prince Georges County in Maryland recently voted to increase the minimum wage in those localities. They didn't need permission from Maryland General Assembly to do so. Arlington and Alexandria might be inclined to follow suit (the District government also voted to increase the minimum wage) but do not have that power.

The General Assembly limits how localities can raise revenue, what kinds of traffic regulations they can implement, whether they can control where guns are allowed, whether school districts can begin classes before Labor Day, and much more.

Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria sent their members of the Northern Virginia delegation of state senators, all Democrats, and delegates, overwhelmingly Democrats (13-5), to Richmond, where the House of Delegates is overwhelmingly Republican and control of the Senate is still up in the air pending special elections.

Del. Ken Plum (D-36) filed HB536 which would "increase the minimum wage from its current federally mandated level of \$7.25 per hour to \$8.25 per hour effective July 1, 2014, and to \$9.25 per hour effective July 1, 2015, unless a higher minimum wage is required by

the federal Fair Labor Standards Act." It isn't likely to see the light of day.

Anyone can watch the Virginia House of Delegates or Senate on streaming video when either is in session, and the Virginia General Assembly proved last year that it can be worthy of national attention for entertainment. It is in fact well worth tuning in once or twice or more. Visit <http://viriniageneralassembly.gov/> and click on "members and session," and see the "quick links" section for video links.

Legislators will consider literally thousands of bills between now and March 8.

Some quite random examples of proposed legislation from local delegates and senators:

❖ Del. Dave Albo (R-42): Driving while intoxicated; refusal of blood or breath tests. This bill would allow a person who has been arrested for driving while intoxicated and who has refused to submit to a blood or breath test be given another opportunity to consent to testing after the arresting officer has advised the person of the consequences of his refusal.

❖ Del. David Bulova (D-37): One bill would allow the employment of lights for the observation of deer (spotlighting) for certain activities authorized by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Another would provide that property used in connection with certain crimes associated with human trafficking is subject to forfeiture to the Commonwealth.

❖ Del. Scott Surovell (D-44) has propose the repeal of last year's hybrid tax, plus a bill that would place a cap on the compensation that may be paid to a special counsel appointed to handle certain legal matters where it would be improper or uneconomical for the Attorney

See for Yourself

Visit <http://viriniageneralassembly.gov/> and click on "members and session," and see the "quick links" section for live video links, information on who your legislators are and how to track bills. Every resident is represented by one state delegate and one state senator; look up your and email to be placed on their mailing lists. Consider attending their local meetings.

General, or the Attorney General is unable, to handle such matters. That cap would be the same as allowed for a court appointed attorney, a very small amount.

❖ Del Barbara Comstock (R-34) proposes to allow local school districts to set their own calendars. Another bill would include non-motor vehicles including bicycles among vehicles that any driver must not tailgate. Another would require most state colleges and universities to allocate 75 percent of their slots for in-state students by 2019-2020 school year.

❖ Del. Patrick Hope (D-47) proposes to prohibit firearms on the floor of the House of Delegates. Another bill would require public institutions of higher learning in Virginia to provide a dedicated page on its website to information on mental health resources available to students.

❖ Del. Mark Sickles (D-43) proposes to create the Virginia Health Benefit Exchange, which will be established and operated by a new division within the State Corporation Commission.

❖ Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) would make it a Class 1 misdemeanor for the owner of a website to both post an arrest photo and solicit, request, or accept money for removing the photograph.

❖ Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) proposes to require drivers and passengers to wait for a reasonable opportunity to open vehicle doors on the side adjacent to moving traffic, an effort to prevent the "dooring" of bicyclists.

Five Million Dollars a Day

BY KENNETH R. "KEN"
PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



Virginia taxpayer dollars not returned to them has amounted to five million dollars each day since Jan. 1, and will continue at that rate each day that Virginia refuses to expand its Medicaid program. In addition, at least 400,000 working Virginians will continue to be uninsured.

The 2013 session of the General Assembly created the Medicaid Innovation and Reform Commission (MIRC) to consider whether reforms to Virginia's Medicaid program were sufficient to allow Virginia to proceed with some form of coverage expansion through the Affordable Care Act. MIRC members have been assured by staff that all requested reforms have

been made, but the Commission members from the House of Delegates have refused to acknowledge the reforms and continue along with the Speaker of the House of Delegates to oppose expansion of Medicaid. For otherwise fiscal conservatives to turn down five million dollars of Virginia taxpayer dollars being returned to them to pay the full cost of Medicaid expansion shows the continued animosity that some Republicans have toward the Affordable Care Act that they refer to as Obamacare. To the concern that the federal government will not be able to continue funding the program into the future, Virginia could make a decision to withdraw at that time.

At the same time, the Virginia Chamber of Commerce business plan for the Commonwealth, "Blue-

print for Virginia," supports the Medicaid reforms that have been made and recommends Medicaid expansion. Chamber leadership has termed Medicaid expansion to be both an economic development as well as a workforce issue. Most of Virginia's one million uninsured residents are employed. It is projected that the expansion would create an estimated 33,000 jobs and bring \$21 billion dollars back to the Commonwealth.

Governor Terry McAuliffe is a staunch supporter of Medicaid expansion. As he stated to the Chamber, "Let me be clear on one point. If Medicaid expansion is not the business community's number one priority in your communication with the General Assembly, it will not happen." He calls for "coming together, putting old ideological differences aside and focusing on what makes sense from a

business perspective."

The case for Medicaid expansion goes beyond the strong business case; it is also a humanitarian cause. Social justice organizations, faith communities, and individuals need also to give priority to making their views known to legislators. Give priority to writing or calling House and Senate leadership and members of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees and ask them to approve the expansion of Medicaid. Contact information is available at <http://viriniageneralassembly.gov/membersAndSession.php?seid=1&active=0#!hb=1&mainContentTabs=0>.

Five million dollars a day is a lot of money. It is too much to turn down, especially when it can improve the health and well-being of Virginians. Please make sure your voice is heard on this issue.

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NEWS

Vienna Day of Service Brings Together Nonprofits, Volunteers

More than 75 people explored service volunteering opportunities in the community.

Governor-elect Terry McAuliffe created a day of volunteer service to kick off his term as governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. On Saturday, Jan. 4, more than 75 people came to the American Legion hall on Center Street to explore volunteer opportunities that make the community a better place to live in.

Vienna Day of Service organizer Cherie Lejeune said the event had a "great" turnout of high school students from Oakton, Marshall, Madison and Paul VI. Lejeune said the students agreed that they would push volunteering for the next 5 months of school.

Incentives will be given to the teens who do their 10 hours of required community service by March 15, Lejeune said. The



Volunteers describe the mission of Lands and Waters to potential volunteers at Vienna's Day of Service gathering on Jan. 4. Students from community high schools learned about the volunteer opportunities offered by local nonprofits and service organizations.

PHOTO BY CHERIE TRIPP LEJEUNE

school that contributes the most number of hours by March 31 and then again by June 1 will get a reward to encourage more participation.

"I was really happy so many parents cared to bring their kids out to understand more about the process of volunteering," said Lejeune. "Too many kids just do their 10 hours without really connecting with the organizations they help."

Nonprofits and service organizations who participated in Vienna's Day of Service included Committee for Helping Others [CHO], Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna, Women's Auxiliary Post 180, Honor Card, Volunteer Fairfax, Capital Caring, Toastmasters, Sierra Club, Lands and Water, High Performance Aging, and the Town of Vienna. The town allows for volunteer posts on many of their commissions.

"We figure the individuals who came, as well as the organizers, will give back to their community, at least, 1000 volunteer hours, which makes us very, very happy," said Lejeune. Not included in that number are people like Lejeune and others there who give back hundreds of hours each year, Lejeune said.

— DONNA MANZ



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PHOTOS BY DONNA MANZ/THE CONNECTION

The gift emporium, a cornucopia of handcrafted art pieces for sale to the public, was launched in the fall of 2013.



Hand-painted silk scarves start at \$30. The fabric arts are unique and colorful.

New Exhibition Opens at Vienna Arts Society Center

Award-winning art showcased through January.

There are a lot of things the Vienna Arts Society [VAS] does well: it offers art classes to adults and children; it sponsors and hosts a major art show each fall; it supports a local nonprofit every year with art pieces donated by its artists; it provides children's activities at community events. Its claim to fame, however, is probably the new exhibitions by local artists it produces every month.

The newest showing, "Winners' Wall," open now, runs through Saturday, Feb. 1. Hung pieces include landscapes, portraits and still life.

"The Vienna Arts Society insists that all work on display in



Ursula Nogie, Wei Lu, Debi Elliott and Grace Rooney of the Vienna Arts Society share their artistic thoughts at the artists reception celebrating the opening of the January exhibition, **Winners' Wall**, on Jan. 12 at the art center on Pleasant Street. Lu is holding one of her works. Behind the artists is one of Elliott's art pieces.

its venues is original work created by the hand of the artist," said Dore' Skidmore of the arts society. "I suppose this is one of our most important differences from other 'art galleries', which often mix giclees and other copies - which are often quite good - among the original artworks."

VAS hosted a second-Sunday reception featuring award-winning artists on Jan. 12. VAS Artist of the Year Debi Elliott, first-place Treasury of Art Show winner Ursula Nogie and Treasury of Art Honorable Mention Wei Lu were on-hand. Their works, as are the works of all VAS artists, are for sale.

"Hung" pieces start at about \$250 and go up from there, while bin pieces - unframed - begin at under \$50.

This past fall, VAS introduced a gift emporium, a cornucopia of handcrafted art pieces, from dichroic glass jewelry (think Murano jewelry) to hand-painted real-silk scarves to beaded jewelry, hand-painted fabric art and paintings,

and just about any other art work you can think of.

When a visitor comes into the arts center, they will find " ... friendly artists and a vast collection of affordable artwork in a variety of forms, from award winning paintings to unique artistic gift items ..." said Elliott.

To learn more about the art classes and workshops presented by the Vienna Arts Society, go to <http://viennaartssociety.org>. A schedule of events at the arts center on Pleasant Street, as well as events open to Northern Virginia artists throughout the region, is listed on the art society's website.

The Vienna Arts Society Art Center is located at 115 Pleasant Street NW, Vienna. Phone 703-319-3971 for information or e-mail artcenter@viennaartssociety.org. The VAS Art Center is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

— DONNA MANZ#

ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY MICHAEL BAILEY/COURTESY OF AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE CENTER

Stephanie Holladay Earl as Desdemona and Fernando Lamberty as Othello will perform Shakespeare's "Othello" on Saturday, Jan. 25 at the Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center.

Send announcements to vienna@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

THURSDAY/JAN. 16-FRIDAY/JAN. 17 International Guitar Night. 8 p.m. Wolftrap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. The International Guitar Night (IGN) is the world's premier touring guitar festival, each show bringing together the most interesting and innovative acoustic guitarists to exchange musical ideas in a public concert setting. Tickets: \$25-27.

SATURDAY/ JAN. 18 Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Quick-Step lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. DJ music from Craig Bukowski playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$15 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.
Six Degrees Singers. 7:30 p.m. 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Silver Spring's premiere young professional choir, will perform inspirational choral masterpieces. Tickets are \$15 at the door, students under 18 are free. <http://singsix.com/>

SUNDAY/JAN. 19 Breakfast Buffet. 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. 330 Center Street, N., Vienna. Adults \$8, children \$3. 703-938-1379.
National Choir Appreciation. 9:30 a.m. & 11 a.m. Antioch Christian Church, 1860 Beulah Road, Vienna. The community is invited to share appreciation for choir members at both services. For more information go to www.antiochdoc.org or call 703-539-8238.
Mission Sunday: Sudan. 10 a.m. Great Falls UMC, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. A sermon service hosted by Great Falls United Methodist Church.

THURSDAY/JAN. 23 Music from Oberlin at Oakton, 10th Season! 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. The Darwin String Quartet performing works by Mendelssohn, Haydn, and Piazzolla. 703-842-3156

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/JAN. 24 & 25 THIS. 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. *THIS* is a bright, tart, and melancholy comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. Contains adult language; for theatre-goers over 16. <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/>

SATURDAY/JAN. 25 Gustafer Yellowgold's Show. 10:30 a.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E.,

Vienna. Groovy Gustafer Yellowgold is a small, yellow, cone-headed fellow, who came to Earth from the Sun and has a knack for finding himself neck-deep in absurd situations as he explores his new life in the Minnesota woods. Equal parts pop rock concert and animated storybook, Gustafer Yellowgold concerts are a truly different multimedia experience that entrances children and adults alike. Tickets: \$10. <https://jamminjava.com/events/gustafer-yellowgold>

"Othello." 8 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave, McLean. Tickets: \$20 MCC District residents and \$30 for non MCC District residents. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123.

SUNDAY/JAN. 26 McLean Chocolate Festival. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. McLean Community Center. Wide variety of chocolate vendors. Plenty of parking. Children's game room with chocolate-themed games. Admission fee is \$2, with \$1 going toward the purchase of chocolate. Kids under 6 get in free. McLean Rotary uses proceeds to fund local charitable organizations. www.mcleanchocolatefestival.org.
Music from Oberlin at Oakton. 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Music from Oberlin at Oakton hosts current Oberlin Conservatory students three times a year to provide top-notch music to the local community. "In its 14th season, this program will feature two pianists, a percussionist, and a soprano. (703) 281-4230
You Can Change Your World. 10 a.m. Great Falls UMC, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. A sermon service hosted by Great Falls United Methodist Church.

FRIDAY/JAN. 31 THIS. 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. *THIS* is a bright, tart, and melancholy comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. Contains adult language; for theatre-goers over 16. <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/>

SATURDAY/FEB. 1 Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Samba lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Live music from Mike Surratt & the ECB playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$20 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

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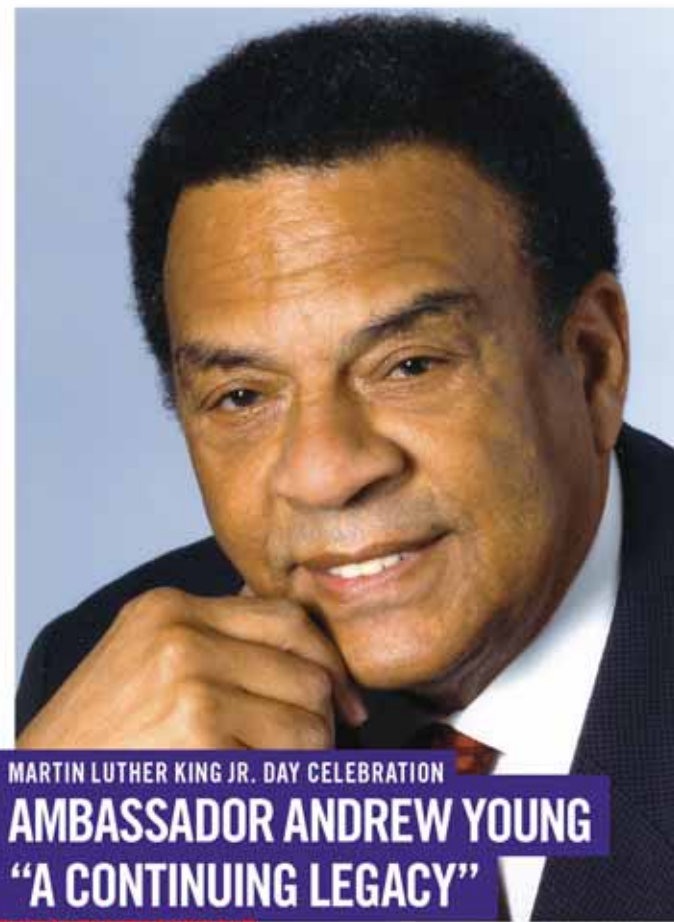
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WEEK IN VIENNA

Bank Robbed in Oakton

Fairfax County police are looking for the person who robbed a BB&T Bank, last Wednesday, Jan. 8, in Oakton. The incident occurred around 11:29 a.m. when a man entered the bank at 2941 Chain Bridge Road.

Police say he handed a teller a note demanding money and implying that he had a weapon; however, no weapon was seen. After receiving an undisclosed amount of cash, he fled the bank on foot. No one was injured.

The suspect was described as black, approximately 29-34 years old and between 5 feet 9 inches and 6 feet tall. He wore all dark clothing. The police helicopter and a K9 team responded to the area in search of the robber, but to no avail.

The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$5,000 for information leading to the identification, arrest and conviction of this bank robber. The FBI and police are investigating this crime together and request that anyone with information call the FBI at 202-278-2000.

People may also contact Crime solvers at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org, text "TIP187" plus a message to CRIMES/274637 or call police at 703-691-2131.

What's Next for I-66

VDOT will hold a public information meeting on the next steps to identify potential traffic improvements in the I-66 Corridor. It's set for Thursday, Jan. 30, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Oakton High School, 2900 Sutton Road in

Vienna. (If cancelled due to weather: Tuesday, Feb. 4).

VDOT and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation have identified 10 concepts to increase

capacity within the I-66 corridor, plus options to increase travel-mode choices, improve individual interchanges, address spot safety needs and enhance travel efficiency.

Volunteer Drivers Are Needed

The Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna has an urgent need for volunteer drivers to take area senior citizens to medical appointments and other activities. Opportunities to volunteer for other services are also available.

Hours are flexible. For more information, go to www.scov.org or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 703-281-5088 or volunteer@scov.org.

Community Volunteers to Be Honored

Town of Vienna Mayor M. Jane Seeman invites Vienna area residents to nominate an outstanding volunteer in recognition of his or her service to the Town. Mayor Seeman will honor these volunteers at a special ceremony on Tuesday, April 8, at the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department.

Nomination forms for outstanding community volunteers are available at Vienna Town Hall, 127 Center Street S, online at www.viennava.gov/index.aspx?NID=850 and in the January and February Town Newsletters. Completed forms must be submitted by March 3 to the Mayor's Office.

For more information, call the Mayor's Office at 703-255-6311, e-mail mayor@viennava.gov or visit www.viennava.gov/index.aspx?NID=850.



Vienna Second Grader Chelsea Hu Performed at McAuliffe Inaugural Ceremony

Vienna Louise Archer Elementary School second grader Chelsea Hu performed "America the Beautiful" with her World Children's Choir at the Saturday, Jan. 11 inauguration of Terry McAuliffe as the 72nd Governor of Virginia.

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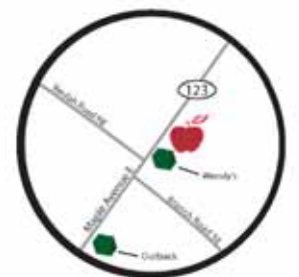
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Creating Books With Children

Experts say helping little readers become authors can deepen a love of reading.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

K.J., 8, and his sister Kalina, 3, love reading books, particularly books they've written themselves or with their mother. In fact, K.J. is an avid reader of both homemade and traditionally published books, and his sister is following in his footsteps.

"When they were younger, I took pictures and copied them on a home printer," said their mother, Holly Karapetkova, an associate professor of literature at Marymount University in Arlington. "Once they were older, they illustrated the books or chose the item they wanted to include like for a specific letter in an alphabet book."

Karapetkova and other researchers said that creating books like this with children is not only easy and inexpensive, it's one of



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLY KARAPETKOVA

K.J., 8, and his sister Kalina, 3, make books with their mother, Holly Karapetkova, a professor of literature at Marymount University in Arlington. Experts say making books with children can help them develop of a love of reading.

the best ways to help them develop a love of books and reading, which Karapetkova said is one of the greatest gifts a parent can give a child.

"Reading is one of the fundamental ways that we interact with the world and particularly with knowledge," she said. "As a college professor, I find that my students who can read well can also think well and write well. They are thinkers on a much deeper level. Research has shown that reading makes you more contemplative, builds patience, concentration, and you have to use your imagination."

MAKING YOUR OWN BOOKS stretches the imagination. M. Susan Burns, Ph.D., a member of the early childhood education and human development and family sciences faculty at George Mason University says there are a few things that parents should keep in mind when making books with their children, however.

"Parents need to make it a positive experience," she said. "Children need to have books available [on topics] that are of true interest to them. When a book is being made

SEE LITTLE READERS, PAGE 15

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SPORTS



South Lakes junior Princes Aghayere scored 18 points and grabbed 19 rebounds against Madison on Jan. 10, giving her 41 rebounds in two games.



Madison junior Kelly Koshuta scored a game-high 28 points against South Lakes on Jan. 10.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

South Lakes' Aghayere, Rendle Dominate Boards in Victory

Madison's Koshuta scores 28 points in defeat.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Few opponents can match the size and skill of South Lakes post players Abby Rendle and Princess Aghayere, who helped the Seahawks win 10 of their first 11 games.

At 6 feet 4, Rendle is a game-changer at each end of the floor. She can score in the paint or from the perimeter, and can alter an opponent's shot with her long arms. Aghayere is an aggressive athlete who scored 15 points and grabbed 22 rebounds during a Jan. 8 contest against Fairfax.

On Jan. 10, the South Lakes girls' basketball team traveled to face Madison and 6-foot-2 forward Kelly Koshuta, providing Rendle and Aghayere a rare opportunity to face a foe of similar size and skill.

"I know personally I was looking forward to this game because she's really known and she plays very well," Aghayere said about facing Koshuta, "so I was really excited for

this game."

Koshuta proved a worthy adversary, scoring a game-high 28 points. But Aghayere and Rendle each produced a double-double and spearheaded a dominant team-rebounding effort during a 60-52 South Lakes victory.

South Lakes out-rebounded Madison 50-14, including 24 offensive boards. While the Warhawks kept the score close, pulling to within four in the final minute, the Seahawks' second-chance opportunities proved too much for Madison to overcome. "It's all about possessions for us," South Lakes head coach Christy Winters Scott said. "The way that we've won a lot of games is to save possession for our team. Whether we score off of it or not, we get the clock [moving]. When we had the lead, it was very important for us to use that clock and get the extra possession from our boards."

Aghayere grabbed 19 rebounds, giving her 41 in two games. She also scored 18 points, including a pair of free throws to give South Lakes a 44-37 lead late in the

third quarter.

"They're just very athletic and they work very hard," Madison head coach Kirsten Stone said about the Seahawks. "I feel like they really wanted to beat us. ... They're a tough rebounding team, we knew that going in."

Rendle finished with 15 points and 12 boards. Her bucket with 5:56 remaining in the fourth quarter capped an 8-0 run and gave South Lakes a 52-42 advantage.

"Every game we've played [against Koshuta], she's always been a threat to us," Rendle said. "She's a really good post player, so being able to play against her also helps us get better as post players [and] as defensive and offensive players."

Despite getting in early foul trouble, Koshuta helped Madison take a 25-19 lead when she converted a three-point play with 3:01 remaining in the second quarter. But with Koshuta on the bench late in the first half, Rendle scored a pair of buckets in the paint, helping South Lakes close the half on an 8-0 run. An Aghayere bucket early in the third quarter gave South Lakes a 29-27 advantage and the Seahawks would lead for the remainder of the contest.

"I look forward to this game all the time," Koshuta said. "Most of the teams we play don't have anyone who is even 6 foot, so it's good to have this competition. I love playing against it. I get very psyched and pumped for it."

Koshuta scored a game-high 28 points, including 19 in the second half, but grabbed just three rebounds.

Koshuta's coach praised Aghayere's effort. "Princess is just that quiet, athletic [player]," Stone said. "She's fast when she needs to be fast, she slows down when she needs to be slow. She has that tenacity to get the ball. She knows where it is and goes for it. It's hard to defend that."

Madison sophomore guard Aidan McWeeney finished with 17 points, connecting on 5 of 9 from 3-point range.

South Lakes improved to 11-1, with its only loss coming against Central Bucks West (Doylestown, Pa.) during the Boo Williams Classic holiday tournament. The Seahawks will host Langley at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 17.

Madison fell to 5-7. The Warhawks will travel to face McLean at 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 17.

Oakton Swim and Dive Beats Chantilly

Oakton High School's Varsity Swim and Dive went head-to-head with the Chantilly Chargers Friday night at Oak Marr RECenter. Oakton won the meet to give the team a record of 4-1. The girls won with 194 points over Chantilly's 106. The boys scored 175 points to beat Chantilly's 140.

Bennett Fagan placed first in the boys' diving event. Corina Gribble came in first place for the girls.

Oakton already has 15 state and 21 region cuts after this meet.

Both the boys' and girls' 200-yard freestyle relay placed first. Michael Ambrose, Michael Pettinichi, Nathan Pawlowicz, and Denny Nguyen swam for the boys. Elise Bourdelais, Megan Byrnes, Julia Capobianco, and Laura Branton raced for the girls. The boys' and girls' 400-yard freestyle relay also placed first. For the boys, John Shebat, Drew Weber, Nathan Pawlowicz, and Denny Nguyen dominated. Laura Branton, Megan Byrnes, Kendall Lawhorn, and Janet Hu won for the girls.

Hu came in first in the 50-yard freestyle

and in the 100-yard butterfly. Branton finished first in the 200-yard freestyle and the 100-yard breaststroke. Byrnes came in first in the 100-yard freestyle and second in the 50-yard freestyle. Madelynne Norton placed second in the 200-yard freestyle and in the 500-yard freestyle. Caroline McCleskey finished second in the 100-yard backstroke and third in the 500-yard freestyle. Bourdelais placed second in the 200-yard individual medley and third in the 100-yard freestyle. Capobianco finished third in the 100-yard butterfly and third in the 100-yard backstroke.

Shebat finished first in the 200-yard In-

dividual Medley and in the 100-yard breaststroke. Michael Ambrose came in first in the 100-yard freestyle and second in the 50-yard freestyle. Pawlowicz placed first in the 200-yard freestyle and third in the 100-yard breaststroke. Nguyen came in second in the 100-yard butterfly and third in the 200-yard freestyle. Jonathan Wen finished second in the 500-yard freestyle and third in the 100-yard backstroke.

Oakton swim and dive will be back in the pool at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 17, against Robinson at Cub Run for Oakton's sixth meet of the season.

SPORTS

Oakton's Weaver Leads Gymnastics Team to Victory

Sophomore wins all-around competition.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

With one of its most skilled gymnasts unable to compete, the Oakton gymnastics team received a clutch performance from sophomore Natalie Weaver to help pick up the slack.

Weaver, one of two club gymnasts on the team, won the all-around competition, leading the Cougars to victory during a home meet on Jan. 9.

With freshman Stephanie Weir, a club gymnast, unable to compete, Oakton managed to produce a score of 129.625, the Cougars' best score of the season. Chantilly placed second with a score of 128.375, followed by South County (118.225), Langley (114.650), Hayfield (102.575) and West Springfield (97.55).

"They all came together and performed wonderfully," Oakton coach Frankie Orbach said. "... Every girl is an asset regardless of their skill or if they've done club before. It was wonderful. It was a pleasant surprise tonight. They all came out and did their best."

Weaver led the way for Oakton, winning the all-around with a score of 34.625.

"She did wonderful," Orbach said. "She's definitely one of our solid competitors. She can pull through in times of need. All the time, she does wonderfully, but especially when we know that a couple of the other girls with higher skill aren't competing. She pulls her game up and does really well for the team."

Weaver won beam (8.7) and bars (8.575), placed third on floor (8.875) and finished fifth on vault (8.475).

"I think we came together as a team," Weaver said, "and I just used everyone else's energy to pump myself up."

As one of the two club gymnasts on the team, Weaver said she tries to help her teammates.

"I give them advice on skills because I've been there and I've learned them just like they're learning them now," she said. "It's good to have support."



Oakton sophomore Natalie Weaver won the all-around competition during a home meet on Jan. 9.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION



Oakton junior Katarina Jones tied for fourth in the all-around during a home meet on Jan. 9.

Oakton junior Katarina Jones and sophomore Amanda Gore tied for fourth in the all-around with a score of 32.725.

Chantilly's Elise Mazzone placed second in the all-around with a score of 33.4, and Langley's Natalie Volpicelli took third (33.125).



Oakton sophomore Amanda Gore competes on vault during a home meet on Jan. 9.

Orbach said Oakton has its sights set on a return to the region meet by placing first or second at the conference meet on Feb. 6 at Centreville.

The Cougars will compete at the Aloha Invitational on Jan. 25 at Patriot High School.

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In Case Someone Is Wondering

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



I don't mind being alive, really I don't. Occasionally though, I receive well-intended inquiries – electronic and otherwise, from people (who know my cancer story) who are sort of wondering if perhaps I'm not. When people haven't heard from me in a while – and this is a category of people with whom I don't have regular/recurring interactions, but rather a group of people who reach out and attempt to touch me (figuratively speaking) every three or four months or so – there is a presumption on their part that my silence (so far as they know) is not in fact golden, but rather ominous, as in the cancer might have won and yours truly didn't. And when I respond, their pleasure/relief at my not having succumbed to the disease is quite positive, generally speaking. Their honesty and joy in learning that I'm still alive is both rewarding and gratifying. Rewarding in that they care and gratifying in that I must be doing something right which enables me to sustain myself through a very difficult set of medical circumstances: stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, the terminal kind (is there any other kind?).

Statistically speaking, stage IV (there is no stage V) non-small cell lung cancer patients, according to various studies by The American Cancer Society, The National Cancer Institute, N.I.H. are not long-term survivors (the understatement of the year). Those of us who survive five years should have a parade, but very few would be alive to attend. February 27th, 2014 will be my five-year anniversary. Lucky doesn't begin to accurately describe my feelings. Amazing begins to scratch the surface.

Obviously, I understand the underlying concern of those individuals who don't hear from me and can't help but wonder (presume even; let's be realistic) that I've joined the ranks of the undesirables: those who have died and not left a forwarding address. In a peculiar way, these queries are my most favorites. They reinforce to me everything I've done right and minimize anything I've done wrong. They make me proud of who I am and how long I've survived with a "terminal" disease. And the longer I continue to receive them, the longer I will have survived. What's better than that? (That's a rhetorical question). Nothing is better than that!

Still, there are many ongoing challenges I face every day. Perhaps as alluded to in the previous paragraph, grasping at straws (figuratively) is one of my enduring pursuits: attempting to find solace, comfort, understanding, support and an indescribable number of non-quantifiable emotions which build me up and make me feel whole again despite being splintered into a million figurative pieces when unexpectedly diagnosed with an inoperable, incurable, terminal disease at age 54 and a half. After having never suffered a broken bone in my entire life or even spent a single night in a hospital (and only one visit to the E.R.), here I was, in the prime of my middle age, being told in effect that my life (certainly as I knew and understood it) was over. If I was in college, I would have put that in my pipe and smoked it. However, as a mid-fifties-aged adult, recently orphaned, I was left to ordinary devices, which had never been so thoroughly tested.

Presently, five years after the fact, the tests still left to be taken mostly involve well-meaning friends and acquaintances wanting to know my status. A little awkward? Sure. A lot of care and concern? Absolutely! Inquiries I can live without? Not a chance.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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Little Readers

FROM PAGE 11

with parents, it may not be engaging if the book is only of interest to the parent.

"Sometimes it gets sickening to have your kid tell you another princess story or another train story, but it is really important though to go with the child's interest," she continued. "You can take a little bit of a twist on the story by maybe adding a map that shows that places where the train might go."

Children may also want to turn to real-life for their books. "Children love to create stories based on their own experiences, and begin to develop a love of art and literature at an early age," said Sharon Fishel, ArtReach director for the McLean Project for the Arts in McLean. "Parents can foster the link between drawing, writing and reading by having their child draw pictures of their daily routine or special events, such as field trips, family outings or unplanned adventures."

When creating a homemade book, the text doesn't have to be original either. "You can take a familiar song and adapt the lyrics," said Karapetkova. "For example, a book about a daily routine can say 'This is the way we brush our teeth, brush our teeth, brush our teeth early in the morning.'"

The techniques for young children are a little different. "You want a little one to engage with a book," said Fishel. "A parent-child idea is nice. We do a lot of parent-child workshops here [at the McLean Project for the Arts] where one parent does one side [of the page] and child does the other."

The books children and their parents create don't have to be fancy, however. "When I've made books like this with my children, we've taken photos, we cut out pictures from magazines, glue sticks, something to put the picture onto," said Burns. "You can make those books fun by using artifacts. If you're doing a book from your beach trip, your child may want to put some sand in the book, but it is important to have a child initiate it."

"I like the thicker paper stock and sometimes it makes it easier to hold onto," she added. "The other thing is to get the clear laminating paper and putting a plastic sheet over it."

Even "folded paper, bound with a pencil becomes a writer's journal," said Karapetkova. "You can also take plastic zip-lock bags, punch holes in the bags, fill them and they become bath time books because they are waterproof."

Fishel suggests sticking with the basics: "Composition book, crayons, colored pencils. Go to a crafts store [and get] bags of origami papers or printed pattern papers," she said, noting that "each part of it can be come a lesson plan. Get a patterned piece

of paper and explore with your child what makes that a pattern. Don't assume that your child knows."

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS at St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Potomac create their own books as part of the elementary school curriculum. Jordan Love, head of the Lower School, said that parents can "create a writing center at home by providing a child with an area dedicated to their work and ideas. All children need is blank paper, coloring crayons or markers, and a quiet place to work, preferably at a table that is their size. Elementary-age children should be provided paper that has a blank section at the top and lines on the bottom.

"As a college professor, I find that my students who can read well can also think well and write well. They are thinkers on a much deeper level."

— **Holly Karapetkova, Ph.D., Marymount University.**

"For preschool age children," Love said, "parents can ask their child to dictate or describe in order the illustrations. Parents should describe what they are writing while the child watches them transcribe their ideas to the paper. This reinforces that language can be printed."

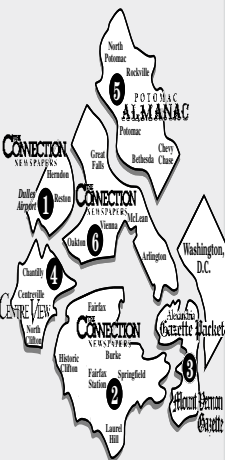
Experts add that it's important to emphasize that mistakes, corrections and changes are OK. "I usually say don't let them erase what they write or draw 150 times. It is not about perfection," said Fishel.

Burns agrees. "In books for pleasure you don't want to make big corrections," she said. "It's the relationship with parents that will make it positive."

Love suggests that parents display their children's books. "Writing and reading go hand in hand, and through supporting the writing process, parents are enhancing their child's ability to be a more effective and efficient reader. Writing together helps to expand a child's vocabulary, encourage creativity, activate prior knowledge, and build self-esteem."

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Lift Me Up! Shares History of Secretariat

The nonprofit kicks off its Good Fences Make Good Neighbors fundraiser in Reston and Great Falls.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD
THE CONNECTION

Many know the story of Secretariat, a thoroughbred horse who overcame great physical limitations to win the 1973 Triple Crown, taking home wins at the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes and the Belmont Stakes. However, many may not be aware of Northern Virginia's historical ties to Secretariat's owner, Penny Chenery, who rode for the equestrian team for the Madeira School in McLean before graduating in 1939.

During January and February 2014, Great Falls nonprofit Lift Me Up! will share Secretariat's story with Great Falls and Reston residents in a film screening of Disney's Secretariat, as well as a book signing featuring Chenery's daughter, Kate Tweedy, co-author of Secretariat's Meadow: The Land, The Family, The Legend. In the book, Tweedy and her co-author Lianne Ladin detail the history of The Meadow, a thoroughbred farm in Caroline County, Va., once owned by the Chenery family. In the movie Secretariat, for which Tweedy served as a consultant, the champion thoroughbred horse helps to financially save The Meadow after winning the Triple Crown in 1973.

LIFT ME UP!'S THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM offers horseback riding lessons to both the physically and mentally disabled, as well as military veterans injured in battle through its Back in the Saddle program. Many of the riders have mental health conditions ranging from autism to cerebral palsy, down syndrome and post-traumatic stress disorder, to name a few, and they all benefit greatly from renewed balance, coordination and confidence from riding with Lift Me Up!'s therapy horses.

Georgia Bay, Director of Programs for Lift Me Up! notes that while its 13 therapy horses may not be championship-winning thoroughbreds, they do make a difference in riders' lives every day. "We see these wonderful little victories – the child who develops the ability to sit balanced, when before he could just lean to the side; the rider who decides to talk after months of riding in silence," said Bay, adding fondly, "Of course that first comment is always about the horse."

The nonprofit receives help from community donors and volunteers as well as student interns, equestrian students from the Madeira School, who work with riders each week. "If Penny were attending there now, I imagine she would likely volunteer too," said Laura Smith, Director of Donor Relations. Smith also noted that Penny's father, Christopher Chenery, helped to train military veterans in horseback riding here in Northern Virginia. "Penny has long been a champion for horses and people with disadvantages."

ONE OF THE PROGRAM'S HORSES is actually a former racing thoroughbred named Radar,

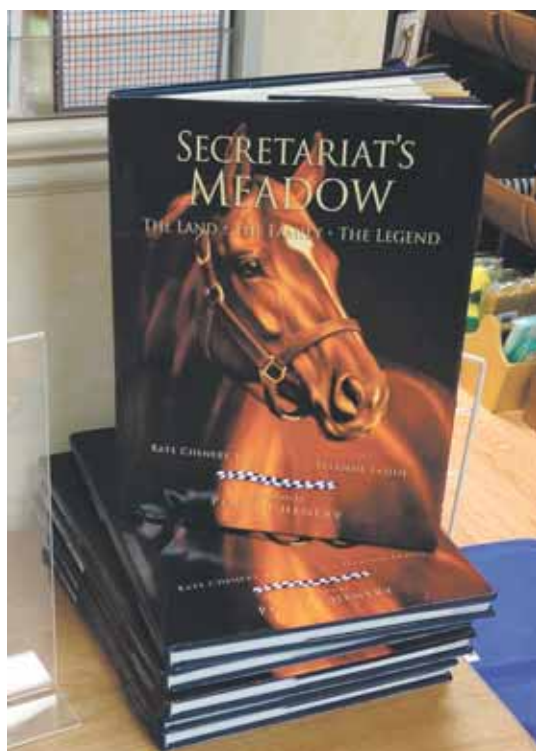


PHOTO BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

The Saddlery, at 731 Walker Road in Great Falls, is selling copies of Secretariat's Meadow: The Land, The Family, The Legend by Kate Tweedy and Lianne Ladin for \$35.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ Film Screening of Disney's Secretariat from 1-3 p.m., Jan. 31. Free. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, VA 22066
- ❖ Book signing featuring Kate Tweedy, daughter of Penny Chenery and co-author of Secretariat's Meadow: The Land, The Family, The Legend, 5-8 p.m., Feb. 8, 2014. Cost: \$50 for entrance, \$35 per book copy. Fairfax Hunt Club, 1321 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston.

who, after a short-lived racing career, has taken home awards with young riders at the Therapeutic Riding Association of Virginia's statewide horse show in Lexington, Va. Radar's former owner Donna Zimmerman, a Great Falls resident, donated him to Lift Me Up! after her daughter Jenna, now a volunteer with the organization, outgrew the former competition racing horse.

"He was the most gentle, caring soul that I had ever seen in a horse, and for me at the time, I knew that this horse was going to be safe with my daughter to learn on," said Zimmerman of Radar. When her daughter moved on to higher competition levels, Zimmerman saw that Radar would make a great training horse and notified Program Director Georgia Bay. "He's not a high-strung thoroughbred at all," added Zimmerman. "We knew that he would be a perfect horse for the riders to learn on at Lift Me Up! It's great to see him bring so much joy to so many people."

Lift Me Up!'s major fundraising program for 2014 is called Good Fences Make Good Neighbors. The organization is collecting donations from the community in order to fund the building of new fences surrounding the nonprofit's property in Great Falls. "We need to reinforce our fences to protect both our horses and the properties of our neighbors," said Lift Me Up! President Bob Best about the fundraiser.

In addition to the organization's upcoming fundraising events in January and February, The Saddlery, located at 731 Walker Road in Great Falls, is also selling copies of Secretariat's Meadow for \$35 to contribute to the fundraiser.

NEWS

Del. Keam Introduces His New Legislation

Named to House Courts of Justice Committee.

effort to reduce unacceptably high rate of unemployment among our military veterans.

❖ HB 831 would create a working group to study and make recommendations related to the provision of care for individuals with dementia residing in nursing homes and facilities in the Commonwealth, as more and more Virginians live longer while facing a shortage of qualified caretakers.

❖ HB 832 would create a working group to study the effectiveness of communication and cooperation among law enforcement and behavioral health services providers in an effort to create a seamless web of services for all Virginians who face dangerous mental health challenges.

❖ HB 833 would create a new category of leave for workers called, "Safe Days," which would allow employees to take paid days off to seek medical attention or counseling assistance should they become victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

❖ HB 834 would expand the existing Virginia law that prohibits harassment by computer to also include bullying behavior as that term is already defined in Virginia law, to address "cyber bullying."

❖ HB 835 would add the presence of any underground pipelines or storage tanks carrying hazardous material such as natural gas or oil to the list of items to be disclosed by owners or sellers of residential properties, to raise awareness of such potential hazards to homeowners.

❖ HB 836 would provide workers with the option of receiving their pay from their employers through prepaid debit cards, instead of the current policy that allows employers to choose the debit card payment option for their workers.

❖ HB 837 would amend the Virginia Freedom of Information Act by requiring government agencies to post on their websites a range of charges that they may assess to members of the public for complying with FOIA requests.

❖ HB 838 would address an inconsistency in the voting process by treating all absentee ballots to be accepted the same way, whether they were mailed to Virginia from within the United States or from overseas.

Details on all of these bills are at <http://lis.virginia.gov>.

Del. Mark Keam (D-35) began his third term in the Virginia General Assembly on a high note, garnering a new committee assignment and introducing 10 bills. He took the oath of office last Wednesday, Jan. 8, at noon.



Keam

When he first came to Richmond in January 2010, he was assigned the most junior ranking position – number 100 out of 100 members in the House. But last week, he moved up to number 64 in seniority as a result of last November's and recent special elections.

In addition, on the first day of session, Speaker of the House William J. Howell added Keam to the House Courts of Justice Committee, besides his ongoing memberships on three other House committees – Finance; Education; and Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources.

It's unusual for a member of the minority party to serve on four committees. In fact, out of 33 Democratic members of the House, only four delegates hold as many as four committee memberships.

The Courts of Justice Committee considers matters relating to Virginia state courts, such as nominations of judges and justices. This committee also receives more legislation than any other committee in the House and addresses criminal laws, contracts, juvenile and domestic relations, eminent domain, fiduciaries, garnishments, magistrates, mechanics' and other liens, property and conveyances, as well as wills and estates.

Also on this session's first day, Keam introduced 10 bills addressing a wide range of problems facing Virginians and their state government:

❖ HB 829 would prohibit the sale or use of automated sales suppression devices, which are electronic tools that help criminals falsify records of cash registers to avoid paying the full amount of sales taxes owed to the state.

❖ HB 830 would prohibit any employer from denying initial employment based on the applicant's military status, in an